

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Ellenberg, Supervisor](#)
Date: Tuesday, June 4, 2019 3:09:45 PM
Attachments: [Representatives.pdf](#)

Supervisor Ellenburg,

I thought it would be worthwhile to share a project that I've been working on with you!

After the recent developments across the Nation regarding womxn's rights and abortion, I decided to engage elected officials including all US Senators & Representatives, California State Senators & Assembly Members, US Supreme Court Justices, and the President - about 750+ - via a written letter.

In that line, I've attached the letter that I wrote and have decided to further engage local officials in Santa Cruz and Santa Clara. You'll likely be receiving a physical copy in the near future, but regardless, I wanted to reach out to you directly and share.

It's my hope that in pursuing this project (and having to engage friends, family, and peers) that others recognize the importance in contacting their representatives and are inspired to practice community engagement. Not to mention, to start a healthy dialogue and help enact policies that support womxn's health, family planning, and reproductive education.

Feel free to share this letter with you colleagues and staff! I've also attached the link to the petition that corresponds. Link: <http://chng.it/gKcnT4VSh>.

Have a great week!

Best Regards,

[REDACTED]

Dear Representative,

Please, take the time to read this letter and avoid passing it on as a simple yes/no “check-box” from your government aids. This letter is a sincere, fully-researched state-of-issue review for your consideration. I am addressing the important topic of Pro-Life/Pro-Choice advocacy. Respectfully, thank you.

I am writing to you because a witty, satirical tweet is too short, a picture on Instagram is inevitably out-liked by thousands of others, an algorithm that leverages personal bias dismisses a Facebook post someone “may not like,” and an unrelenting, sensationalist news cycle saturates televisions and news feeds every day. More importantly, I am writing to you to take direct action on behalf of every wife, daughter, granddaughter, mother, niece, female colleague, and womxn, in your state and the nation, who thinks hxr voice is amongst the unheard and trapped in an “echo chamber” where all hxr outrage, hurt, and pleading is lost (Johnson 2019). It is my hope, that as you continue to read this letter, the words I share with you will reach outside of that “echo chamber,” resonate, and motivate you to listen and champion the future of independent, beautiful, and capable womxn, worthy of representation (Johnson 2019).

I understand your position, the complexities of the challenges you face, and sympathize; I, too, want to be an elected official for my community, state, or and nation one day and to meet opposition with a sincere conviction and courage to stamp out injustices, defend marginalized communities, and fairly represent constituents, not polls. And yes, starkly standing out from all these challenges is the old-age adage of, “you can’t please everyone;” there is always a stakeholder who deems their time, contributions, and views more important than or in conflict with a lesser. However, in those moments, I think to Leslie Knope – a fictional television persona embodying core values that resonate with good-intentioned, steadfast public servants – when she says, “what I hear when I’m being yelled at is people caring loudly at me” (Axler and Gordon, 2009). Here is me, a womxn for all womxn, taking the opportunity to be loud in my passion and devotion to a better future. For all womxn, I urge you to listen to our collaborative voices requesting audience to your table that you might encourage, enact, and execute policies that demonstrate outcomes of respect, opportunity, free agency, and *care*.

As an elected representative, we have chosen you to act on your knowledge, experience, and journey, and thus, recognize your unique ability and capacity to uphold your commitment and combat unique pressures. The day that the people elected and inaugurated you, you solemnly swore to support and protect the Constitution of the United States and State, and to well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office you entered. And, since that day, you have held a seat of trust, become the voice of the people, and spoken on our behalf with integrity. Today, womxn are speaking and asking that you wield your power responsibly, humbly acknowledge the impact

that your policy decisions and vote have on current society and its future generations. Listen to our outcries to STOP, stop the war on womxn.

Here are the facts: (1) 60% of Americans “said abortion should be legal in all or most cases,” (2) 80% of Americans said “abortion should be legal in at least some circumstances” (e.g., rape, incest, disease, and health complications), (3) “the idea that restrictions could be good for women” has been debunked by the medical community who “say these regulations are unnecessary or even harmful,” and (4) the focus on the abortion debate has been about protecting fetal life, not womxn (Hartig 2018, p. 2 and Thomson-DeVeaux 2019, p. 11-13). Furthermore, speaking directly to the decision to end a pregnancy, (5) womxn and mxn both see “abortion as a right to be used responsibly,” not to be used to replace contraception, and only to be employed “as an option of last resort” (Moore et al. 2011, pg. 10-13). Unfortunately, (6) “despite the emergence of a variety of highly effective contraceptive methods,” there remains “persistently high rates of unintended pregnancy” and an upwards battle to promote and support “informed fertility decisions” and reproductive education; this upwards battle does not make sense (Hock-Long 2010, pg. 1). Recent research suggests that (8) “the provisions of medical services to womxn who experience unintended pregnancies and the infants who are born as a result of such pregnancies cost taxpayers \$9.6-12.6 billion annually” (Monea and Thomas 2011, pg. 91). And yet, our local, state, and federal legislatures struggle to integrate preventative programs (e.g., “comprehensive teenage pregnancy prevention programs, expansions in subsidized family planning services, and media campaigns encouraging contraceptive use”) that (9) “would produce public savings of about half that amount” and reduce unintended pregnancies (Monea and Thomas 2011, pg. 91-2). Not to mention, for entities acting on behalf of policies that encourage and subsidize contraception, (10) “should [their] funding for contraceptive services be withdrawn” as a consequence of conservative, religious, or pro-life decisions, “the additional unintended pregnancies – and the resulting births and abortions – would increase demands on already overburdened health and welfare services” (Forrest and Singh 1990, pg. 167). Past research also indicates that aside from “a more stable family system, [and] a more integrated community and social structure,” the (11) “provision of contraceptive and abortion services” are conducive to “lower rates” of “pregnancy and birth” (Singh 1986, pg. 219). And, demonstrates that (12) “abortion is less common where contraceptive use is widespread” (Sedgh et al. 2011, pg.196). Lastly, and sadly, the reality is that (13) “in all societies, some womxn and couples will have unintended” or have complicated pregnancies, and because “some of them will decide to end their pregnancies,” it remains crucial that womxn are ensured “access to safe abortion services” (Sedgh et al. 2011, pg. 196).

Consider your position and reflect:

If you are pro-life: Womxn are not seeking power over mxn or over other womxn, but rather, agency and autonomy over themselves. As I endeavor to sympathize with your perspective, my central questions include, “are there other options before escalating pro-life legislation that includes unrealistic procedural timeframes lest they face criminalization – the criminalization of medical professionals committed to unprejudiced care of human welfare as well as womxn, some of

whom are rape and incest victims (Kadigan, 2017)? And, studying the unique statistics of your district or state, what are the relevant crises (e.g., gender crimes, foster care, welfare, systematic racism, poverty, domestic violence, and etcetera) that lead to a higher number of unintended pregnancies or unwanted children?" There must emerge other options that do not harbor a concealed opinion that "an unborn fetus bears more value than you" or "womxn are less and unqualified to make decisions for themselves." For instance, your district or state could work with churches or non-profits to encourage positive cultural transformation and community mapping, establish programs that give womxn and mxn access to information and appropriate, responsible family planning or abstinence support, or bolster funding for adoption and comprehensive, wrap-around services for community "hot spots" with high volumes of teen or unintended pregnancies. These options, which are only a few of the many, reflect the *care* and a core belief that a wife, daughter, granddaughter, mother, niece, female colleague, and womxn are more than their gender. Instead, they are human – people who have the freedom to avail all options and opportunities in life, exercise choice, and not exclusively as a child-bearer reduced to a "biological role."

If you are neither pro-choice nor pro-life: Your silence convicts without due process and will not protect womxn (U.S. Const. amend. XIV, § 1). The conversations that abortion spark are not exclusive – they include you, along with every other human. And, at their center, speak to a movement and cry for fundamental rights that the Constitution explicitly states: "No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law..." (U.S. Const. amend. XIV, § 1). For that reason, you fit into the conversation and have a responsibility to promote dialogue that normalizes, "yes, we proudly represent and respect womxn" and encourage others who, for fear of persecution, are hesitant to join; you are an example, a leader – demonstrate *care* and use your platform to lead your colleagues and constituents towards inclusivity and equitable representation of womxn.

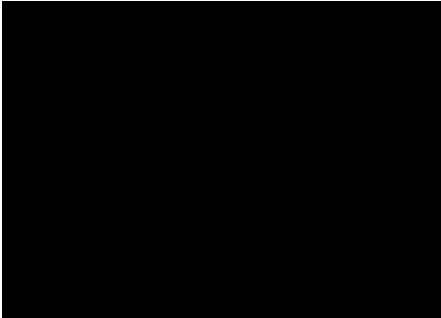
If you are pro-choice: Incessantly, without reserve, protest, write, speak, share, donate, filibuster, vote, or veto, and inspire your constituents and others' to act. And, in tandem, work side-by-side with your colleagues across religious and party divides to drive real solutions that mitigate unintended pregnancies, encourage open, healthy dialogue about sexual health and reproduction, and support our womxn and their sovereignty. Furthermore, have the courage to look forward as opposition pulls your attention backward because our present, most tempestuous challenges guide our journey to goodness and justice. Withal, as you exercise courage, invest time and *care* into your efforts so you can amplify and invigorate your actions and consequently, their positive outcomes.

I have heard it said that "change happens at the seat of trust" and I, along with every other womxn, entrust you to make change; change the conversation, brazenly endorse a legacy of independent, empowered womxn, and challenge social-norms and policies that reflect an abuse of power in self-interest, appease the small, influential few, or reinforce negative behavior and rhetoric against womxn. As history looks back, it will remember you, and we will remember you outside of the perfectly crafted tweets, "laugh-out-loud" memes, headache-worthy facebook rants, and red-outlined, bold and irritating text sliding at the bottom of our preferred news outlets as someone who did or did not "abridge [our] privileges or immunities" and "deprive [womxn] of life [and] liberty" (U.S. Const. amend. XIV, § 1). As I call you to action, my last reminder to you is: a womxn's future –

my future – is hxr own, any attempt to oppress that notion will be met with strength, dignity, and unfettered ambition.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Keeping Watch,



we all move forward when
we recognize how resilient
and striking the women
around us are
- rupi kaur

References:

Axler, Rachel and Gordon, Seth. (2009, April 16). Canvassing. Deedle-Dee Productions and Universal Media. *Parks and Recreation*. NBC: United States.

Forrest, J. D., & Singh, S. (1990). The impact of public-sector expenditures for contraceptive services in California. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 161-168.

Hartig, Hannah. (2018, October 17). Nearly six-in-ten Americans say abortion should be legal in all or most cases. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/10/17/nearly-six-in-ten-americans-say-abortion-should-be-legal/>.

Hock-Long, L., Whittaker, P. G., & Hecceg-Baron, R. (2010). Family planning service delivery research: a call to focus on the dynamics of contraceptive use. *Perspectives on sexual and reproductive health*, 42(1), 10-1.

Johnson, Kimberly [@magamas]. (2019, May 16). STEP OUT OF THE ECHO CHAMBER [Instagram photograph]. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/BxiYVRMhqGB/?>.

Kadigan, Brian. (2017, September 26). Medical oath taken by doctors. *Biz Fluent*. Retrieved from <https://bizfluent.com/info-8208060-medical-oath-taken-doctors.html>.

Kaur, Rup. (2016). *Milk and Honey*. Kansas City, Missouri: Andrews McMeel Publishing, LLC.

Moore, A. M., Singh, S., & Bankole, A. (2011). Do women and men consider abortion as an alternative to contraception in the United States? An exploratory study. *Global public health*, 6(sup1), S25-S37.

Monea, E., & Thomas, A. (2011). Unintended pregnancy and taxpayer spending. *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 43(2), 88-93.

Sedgh, G., Singh, S., Henshaw, S. K., & Bankole, A. (2011). Legal abortion worldwide in 2008: levels and recent trends. *Perspectives on sexual and reproductive health*, 43(3), 188-198.

Singh, S. (1986). Adolescent pregnancy in the United States: an interstate analysis. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 18(5), 210-220.

Sonfield, A., Kost, K., Gold, R. B., & Finer, L. B. (2011). The public costs of births resulting from unintended pregnancies: National and state-level estimates. *Perspectives on sexual and reproductive health*, 43(2), 94-102.

Thomson-DeVeaux, Amelia and Wezerek, Gus. (2019, May 21). Here's why the anti-abortion movement is escalating. *FiveThirtyEight*. Retrieved from <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/we-categorized-hundreds-of-abortion-restrictions-heres-why-the-anti-abortion-movement-is-escalating/>.

U.S. Const. amend. XIV, § 1

Wasserlauf, Katherine. (2019, May). Personal communications.